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Programme planning

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2008-2009

Part two: biennial programme plan

Programme 2
Political affairs

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* A/61/50 and Corr.1.

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Overall orientation

2.1 The overall objective of the programme is to maintain international peace and security by assisting States involved in disputes or conflict to resolve their differences peacefully, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions emanating from the various organs of the Organization, wherever possible, by preventing conflicts from arising through preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. The direction of the programme is provided in the pertinent resolutions of the General Assembly and the mandates of the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Within the Secretariat, substantive responsibility for the programme is vested in the Department of Political Affairs.

2.2 The strategy in meeting the programme's objectives is designed around six subprogrammes, including the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process as a separate subprogramme. The activities to be implemented relate to: early warning; preventive diplomacy; peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding; electoral assistance; the provision of substantive support to policymaking organs, such as the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; and the role of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. These activities constitute the core functions of the Department of Political Affairs and together represent interdependent and complementary components of a comprehensive conflict-prevention, conflict-management and peacebuilding approach.

2.3 The Department will continue to strive to reinforce the Organization's capacity for early warning, good offices and non-military measures to prevent disputes from escalating into conflicts, as well as to resolve conflicts that have erupted, while fully respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Member States and the principle of non-intervention in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State as well as respecting the principle of consent, which is an essential element for the success of such efforts. The Department will also endeavour to enhance its capacity with regard to the political aspects of peacebuilding, as approved by the relevant intergovernmental bodies.

2.4 The Department of Political Affairs will continue to work with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and with other relevant departments within the Secretariat in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) on the subject of terrorism.

2.5 Special attention will also be given to incorporating a gender perspective into the work of the programme, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

Subprogramme 1
Prevention, control and resolution of conflicts

Objective of the Organization: to maintain international peace and security through prevention, control and resolution of conflicts by peaceful means

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Improved capability of the international community to identify and address conflict situations and to participate in their resolution	(a) 100 per cent response to all requests of Member States and regional organizations for preventive action
(b) Maintenance of the peace process on track	(b) (i) The number of initiatives in support of peace processes (ii) The number of projects to support peacebuilding efforts

Strategy

2.6 Substantive responsibility for the subprogramme is vested in the regional divisions, namely, the Africa I and Africa II Divisions, the Americas and Europe Division, and the Asia and the Pacific Division, which are assisted by the Policy Planning Unit. In order to attain the objective of the subprogramme, the Department will promote a more effective and cohesive response to help prevent, control and resolve conflicts and to address post-conflict peacebuilding challenges facing countries emerging from crisis or conflict by: (a) responding in a timely manner to new conflict situations; (b) providing timely and accurate information, analysis and policy options; (c) formulating recommendations on measures that could be undertaken by the United Nations system; (d) making available, and providing substantive and technical support to, the Secretary-General's good offices aimed at facilitating peaceful outcomes of sensitive situations in various regions, including through formal mediation, where appropriate; (e) enhancing capacity for cooperation with regional and subregional organizations; (f) providing substantive support and guidance to special political and peacebuilding missions; (g) strengthening the Department's capacity and expertise in order to address challenges for peace and security more effectively; (h) undertaking research on post-conflict issues and best practices by the United Nations system in this area; and (i) developing coherent strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding, linking diplomatic, military, humanitarian and developmental efforts by the United Nations system and other international and regional actors. To this end, the Department of Political Affairs will work closely with other relevant parts of the United Nations system.

Subprogramme 2
Electoral assistance

Objective of the Organization: to render electoral assistance to Member States, at their request and in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, through the provision of the technical and advisory support necessary for holding periodic and fair elections

Expected accomplishment of the Secretariat	Indicator of achievement
Enhanced capacity of Member States requesting assistance to organize periodic and fair elections	Qualitative improvements of electoral processes as a result of United Nations assistance and support

Strategy

2.7 Substantive responsibility for the subprogramme is vested in the Electoral Assistance Division, which provides the leading role in all United Nations electoral assistance activities. To achieve the objective of the subprogramme, the Electoral Assistance Division will provide international expertise in a timely, coordinated and effective manner for the organization and conduct of electoral processes to requesting Member States, including key guidance and support in the context of peace negotiations, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. The Division will assess the conditions and the needs for the holding of credible elections in the requesting countries. On the basis of those assessments, the Division will formulate strategic responses and provide guidance on their execution, including technical cooperation and expert advice on the establishment and enhancement of electoral management bodies. In doing so, it will establish partnerships with national and international bodies, within and outside the United Nations system, in order to foster the consistent application of international standards. It will develop technical parameters and best practices in the electoral field. The Division will also provide guidance on the establishment of electoral components in peace operations and on the organization of elections based on a specific mandate. The Division, in compliance with resolutions of the General Assembly or the Security Council, will support United Nations electoral observers when deployed.

Subprogramme 3
Security Council affairs

Objective of the Organization: to facilitate the deliberations and effective decision-making by the Security Council and its subsidiary organs

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Meetings conducted in a timely and procedurally correct manner	(a) The degree of satisfaction expressed by members of the Security Council, as well as the wider United Nations membership, with the services provided by the Security Council Affairs Division

(b) Improved access to information relating to the work of the Security Council and its subsidiary organs	(b) (i) Increased number of pages viewed of the online *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council* (ii) Increased number of visits to the Security Council home page
(c) Decisions of the Security Council and its subsidiary organs requiring substantive support by the subprogramme are implemented	(c) (i) Monitoring mechanisms under Security Council sanctions committees are established within the time frame stipulated by Security Council resolutions (ii) Missions of the Security Council and its subsidiary organs are carried out within the time frame stipulated by the relevant organ

Strategy

2.8 Responsibility for the subprogramme is vested in the Security Council Affairs Division, which will provide advice and substantive services to the Security Council and its subsidiary organs, particularly the sanctions committees and the Counter-Terrorism Committee, informal working groups, the Military Staff Committee and the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Advice and substantive services will be provided through: timely issuance of parliamentary documentation and communications; effective coordination of meetings; provision of guidance, in accordance with the Charter, the Council's provisional rules of procedure, Council decisions and past practice, to the Council and wider United Nations membership; provision of support to expert monitoring groups and panels; planning and organization of missions by Council members and chairpersons of its subsidiary organs; research and analysis, including with respect to the implementation, effectiveness and impact of mandatory measures or sanctions imposed by the Council; advocacy and advice regarding the concept of "smarter" sanctions; and provision of familiarization sessions for new members of the Council with respect to the evolving procedure, practice and working methods of the Council and its subsidiary organs, particularly the sanctions committees.

Subprogramme 4
Decolonization

Objective of the Organization: to promote the decolonization process in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly for the 16 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories so as to bring about the complete eradication of colonialism

Expected accomplishment of the Secretariat	Indicator of achievement
The Special Committee and the General Assembly will be able to carry out their decolonization mandates and make progress in the decolonization process of the 16 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories	100 per cent of parliamentary documents are submitted within deadlines

Strategy

2.9 Responsibility for the subprogramme lies with the Decolonization Unit, which will provide support to the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples as well as to the General Assembly. The issues related to decolonization are guided by the Charter, as well as by the principles of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples contained in Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) and other relevant Assembly resolutions.

2.10 The Special Committee and the General Assembly will continue to examine the situation with regard to political, economic and social developments in all territories that have not yet exercised their right to self-determination and to seek suitable means to implement the Declaration in accordance with the Charter and relevant resolutions of the Assembly. The Committee will continue to improve cooperation with the administering Powers at all stages of the decolonization process. It will examine the views of the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. It will also organize its regional annual seminars in the Caribbean and the Pacific, as well as visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Moreover, the Committee will continue to enlist worldwide support for decolonization and formulate proposals with respect to the issues on its agenda and report thereon to the Assembly.

2.11 In support of the above-mentioned legislative bodies, especially the Special Committee, advice and substantive assistance will be provided to the Committee, including: in its deliberations on the situation in the remaining 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories at the annual sessions; during the preparation and conduct of its seminars held alternately in the Caribbean and the Pacific; during visiting missions; and in any other activity carried out to implement the mandated programme of work of the Committee. Assistance will also be provided in improving the Committee's cooperation with the administering Powers, maintaining contacts with the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and developing relations with the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system aimed at achieving further progress in decolonization and bringing a complete end to colonialism. Supportive actions will include closely following the developments in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, conducting research and preparing working papers, reports and analytical and briefing materials. In addition, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, information material, including publications and audio and visual programmes related to decolonization, will be prepared and disseminated to a wide audience, with a view to increasing the awareness of the international community with regard to the decolonization issues as well as in mobilizing international support for the achievement of the complete eradication of colonialism.

Subprogramme 5
Question of Palestine

Objective of the Organization: to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
Through the work of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will generate heightened international awareness of the question of Palestine, as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine	(i) Sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support on the part of the international community for the programme's objectives (ii) Increased number of civil society organizations accredited to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (iii) Increased number of pages viewed on the United Nations website on the question of Palestine

Strategy

2.12 Substantive responsibility for implementing the subprogramme is vested in the Division for Palestinian Rights. The question of Palestine was first considered by the General Assembly in 1947. By its resolution 3376 (XXX), the Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Substantive and secretariat support will be provided to the Committee in its deliberations and its annual programmes of work. Assistance will also be provided to the Committee in promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as the full and effective implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements. Moreover, assistance will be provided to the Committee in mobilizing international support and assistance for the Palestinian people, including technical cooperation, such as an annual training programme for officials of the Palestinian Authority. A negotiated settlement is expected to resolve all outstanding issues. Supportive action by the United Nations will continue until all aspects of the question of Palestine are resolved in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy. Under the auspices of the Committee, thematic international meetings and conferences will be convened to increase awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and to promote dialogue among the parties concerned, including Governments, intergovernmental organizations, entities of the United Nations system and civil society organizations. In addition, and for the same purposes, under the guidance of the Committee, informational materials and resources on the question of Palestine will be developed and updated, including publications, the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the United Nations website.

Subprogramme 6
Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process

Objective of the Organization: to advance the Middle East peace process towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Participants will re-engage in taking parallel steps towards a lasting peace	(a) Increased frequency of negotiations between parties involved in the conflict
(b) Mobilization of resources for improving the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people	(b) The level of resources made available for improving the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people is maintained
(c) Coordinated response to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people	(c) The number of joint projects and activities carried out by United Nations system organizations

Strategy

2.13 The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process was established in accordance with resolution 48/213, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure the coordinated work of the United Nations system for an adequate response to the needs of the Palestinian people and to mobilize financial, technical and economic assistance, and with resolution 49/88, in which the Assembly welcomed the appointment of the Special Coordinator. The Special Coordinator serves as the United Nations focal point for the Middle East peace process, including the socio-economic aspects of the peace process and related United Nations development assistance for Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Syrian Arab Republic.

2.14 The Special Coordinator, through exploration with relevant actors, will develop ways to support the Middle East peace process and provide a coordinated United Nations response to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people. This will include responding to requests from negotiating parties and Member States for assistance related to the diplomatic and socio-economic aspects of the peace process. The Special Coordinator will also develop and provide recommendations on diplomatic, legal, socio-economic and security issues as part of United Nations diplomatic input to the Middle East talks and related consultations, in close coordination with relevant United Nations agencies and programmes. The Special Coordinator will continue to play a leading role in both formal and informal coordination mechanisms and will provide political and humanitarian guidance and support to United Nations agencies and programmes. Greater focus will be given to the linkage between the political processes and the social and economic situation that underpins and strengthens these processes.

Legislative mandates

Subprogramme 1
Prevention, control and resolution of conflicts

Charter of the United Nations, in particular Article 99

General Assembly resolutions

47/120 A	An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy and related matters
47/120 B	An Agenda for Peace
52/12 A and B	Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform
55/161	Observer status for the Economic Community of Central African States in the General Assembly
57/5	Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion
57/26	Prevention and peaceful settlement of disputes
57/32	Observer status for the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the General Assembly
57/41	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community
57/47	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union
57/156	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe
57/157	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States
57/296	Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa
57/298	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
57/337	Prevention of armed conflict
58/7	Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba
58/81	Measures to eliminate international terrorism
58/85	Observer status for the GUUAM [Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova] in the General Assembly
58/86	Observer status for the East African Community in the General Assembly

59/5	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of South-East Asian Nations
59/8	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference
59/9	Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States
59/20	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum
59/22	Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie
59/59	Maintenance of international security — good-neighbourliness, stability and development in South-Eastern Europe
59/131	Question of Western Sahara
59/140	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community
59/213	Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union
59/310	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States
60/1	2005 World Summit Outcome
60/39	Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine
60/233	Situation of human rights in Myanmar

General Assembly decisions

60/509	Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

Security Council resolutions

1196 (1998)	Importance of strengthening the effectiveness of arms embargoes in Africa
1197 (1998)	Support for regional and subregional initiatives on Africa and the strengthening of coordination between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the area of conflict prevention and maintenance of peace
1208 (1998)	Maintenance of the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements in Africa
1209 (1998)	Stemming the illicit arms flows to and in Africa
1318 (2000)	Declaration on ensuring an effective role for the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly in Africa

1366 (2001) Prevention of armed conflict

1631(2005) Cooperation with regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

Subprogramme 2
Electoral assistance

General Assembly resolutions

60/162 Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization

Subprogramme 3
Security Council affairs

Charter of the United Nations, in particular Articles 1, 7, 12 (2), 15, 24, 28, 29, 30, 45, 46, 47 and 50.

General Assembly resolutions

686 (VII) Ways and means for making the evidence of customary international law more readily available

55/222 Pattern of conferences

60/23 Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization

Security Council resolutions

Resolutions and decisions pertaining to the establishment and mandates of subsidiary organs created by the Council under the terms of Article 29 of the Charter of the United Nations, including resolutions 751 (1992), 1132 (1997), 1267 (1999), 1373 (2001), 1518 (2003), 1521 (2003), 1533 (2004), 1540 (2004), 1572 (2004), 1591 (2005) and 1636 (2005).

Subprogramme 4
Decolonization

General Assembly resolutions

1514 (XV) Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

1541 (XV) Principles which should guide Members in determining whether or not an obligation exists to transmit the information called for under Article 73 *e* of the Charter

1654 (XVI) The situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

2621 (XXV)	Programme of action for the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
58/316	Further measures for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly [annex, sect. D, para. 4 (b), Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)]
60/120	Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism
60/110	Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations
60/111	Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories
60/112	Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations
60/113	Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories
60/114	Question of Western Sahara
60/115	Question of New Caledonia
60/116	Question of Tokelau
60/117	Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands
60/118	Dissemination of information on decolonization
60/119	Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

General Assembly decisions

60/525	Question of Gibraltar

Subprogramme 5
Question of Palestine

General Assembly resolutions

3376 (XXX)	Question of Palestine
32/40 B	Question of Palestine
34/65 D	Question of Palestine
38/58 B	Question of Palestine

46/74 B	Question of Palestine
60/36	Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
60/37	Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat

Subprogramme 6
Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process

General Assembly resolutions

48/213	Assistance to the Palestinian People
49/88	Middle East peace process